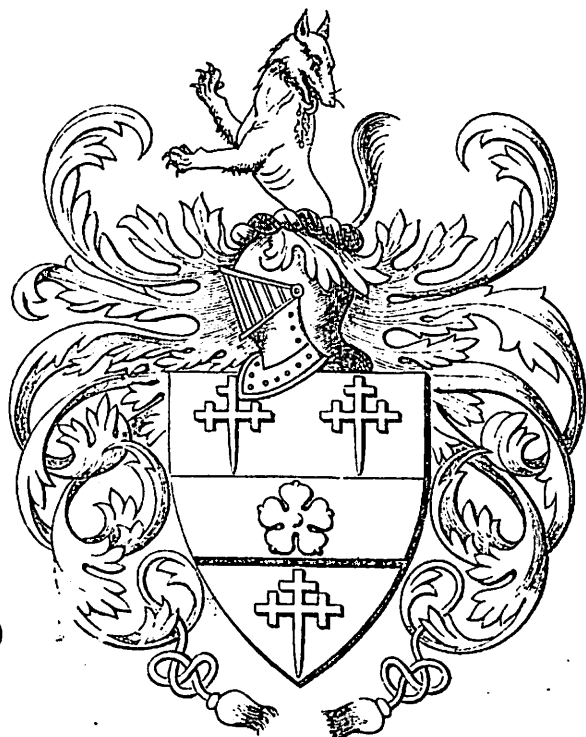


LAWTON OF LAWTON.

(From Ormerod's History of Cheshire.. 1882)

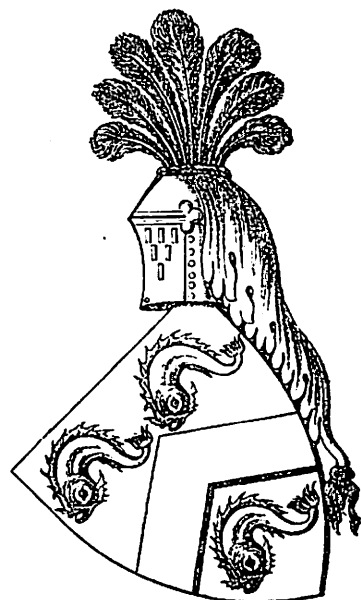
From [the chartulary of the abbey of St. Werburgh, and family documents (abstracted by Frank Renaud, esq. M.D.), the Plea and Recog. Rolls, and Inqs.] a pedigree roll by Dugdale, [apparently copied down to the year 1590, from one by Glover, now at Lawton Hall,] collated with Booth's pedigrees, and continued from the information of the family and the Lawton registers.



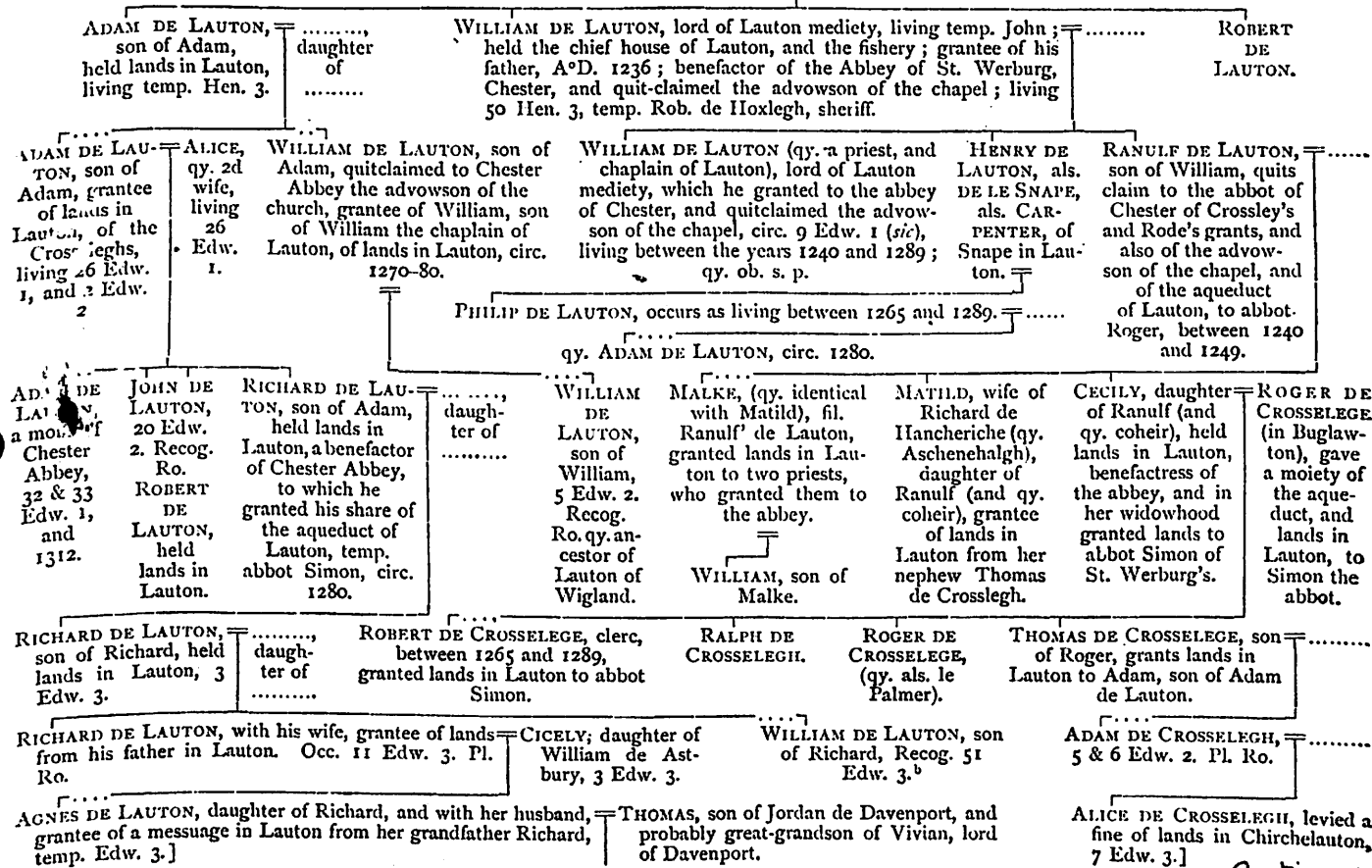
ARMS. Argent, a fesse Sable between three cross crosslets of the second, on the fesse a cinquefoil Argent. [The original coat, however, was Or, a chevron between two cross crosslets in chief, Gules, and a dolphin in base, Azure,^a being a combination of the coats of the early Lautons and the Davenports. The mantle of the present coat, given in the annexed engraving, is copied from the Arms of the family, carved on a snuff-box formerly of Car. II.]

CREST. On a wreath a demi-wolf rampant Argent, licking a wound in the right shoulder, Gules.

[ARMS. Or, a chevron between three dolphins Gules, for Lawton ancient.



ADAM DE LAWTON,
lord of Lawton mediety, living temp.
* John, and Hen. 3.



Continued →

^a Information of Dr. Renaud, F.S.A., from an Elizabethan MSS. volume, penes Mr. R. Wood of Whalley Range, near Manchester, in whose possession is also an ancient pedigree with the following heading, which is good secondary evidence of the early descents:—"Nonnuella Cestrescyrensiu Scuta Gentilitia ex variis reverendae antiquitatis et autoritatis monumentis descripta sequuntur.

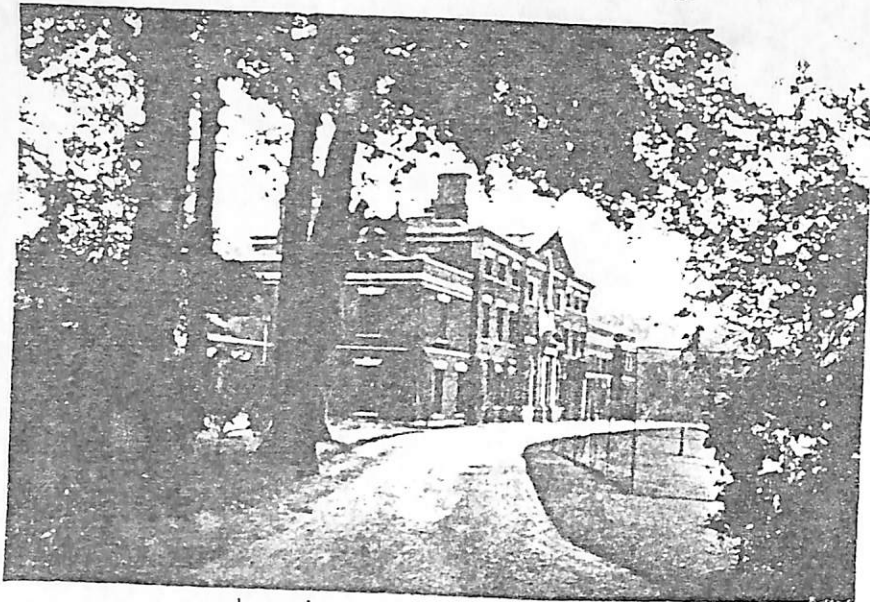
"That w^{ch} followeth ys copied out of a broade booke of parchmente, w^{ch} booke sometyme belonged to Marche King of Armes in y^e tyme of Kyng Edward the 4 after y^e Conquest, but nowe in this p'sent yeare of o' Lord 1588 remayneth in the handes of Robert Cooke Esquire Clarencieux King of Armes and principall herald of the South p'te of this realme of England." Cooke also says "Lawton of Lawton, on a fess between 3 cross crosses a flower, but the ancient arms of Lawton are a chevron between 2 cross crosses in chief goules, and a dolphin in base blue"; and the Crest, "a demi wolf rampant silver, licking a wound on his shoulder goules"; which is probably a grant of about the time of Hen. VIII.—H.

^b 51 Edw. III. Assia mortis ancet' quam Wiffrs de Lawton senior in cur' dñi Regis hic arravi v'sus Wiffr de Lawton marchal & Beatricem uxem ejus de teñ in Chirchelauton, &c. Mem. 16. Ricus de Lawton also occurs Mem. 21, Pl. Ro. 51 Edw. III. and 1 Ric. 2.—H.

*(King John: 1167-1216) .. (1207-1272 Henry III)

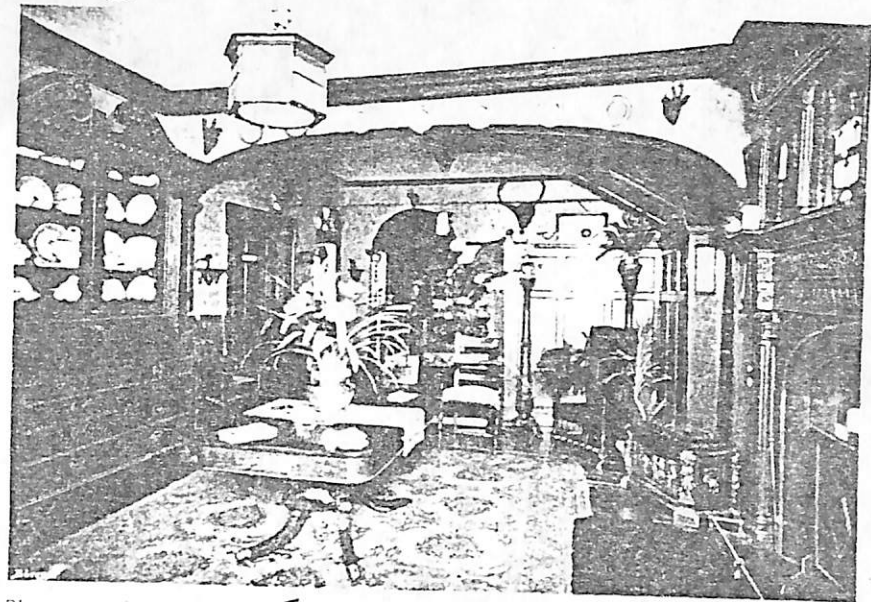
Northwich Hundred. (Hundreds are the old Parliamentary Divisions) 17



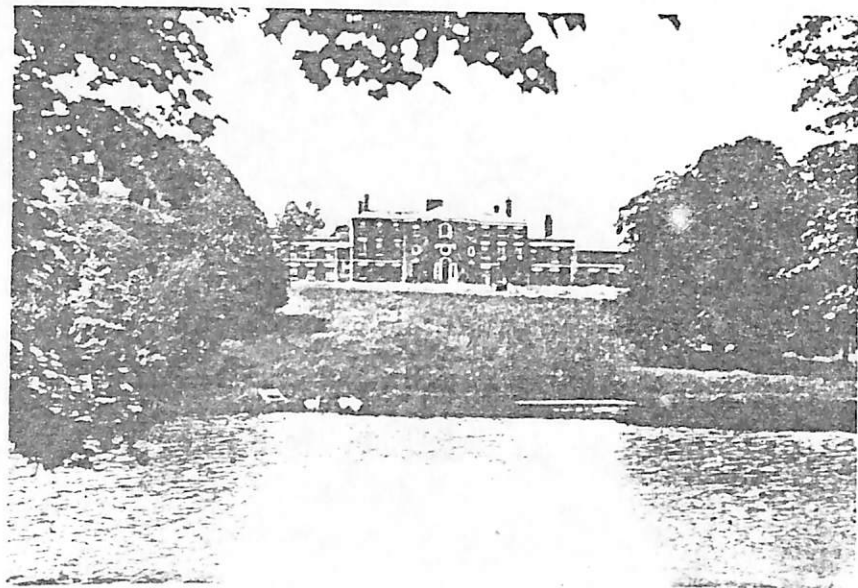


Lawton Hall.. 1934

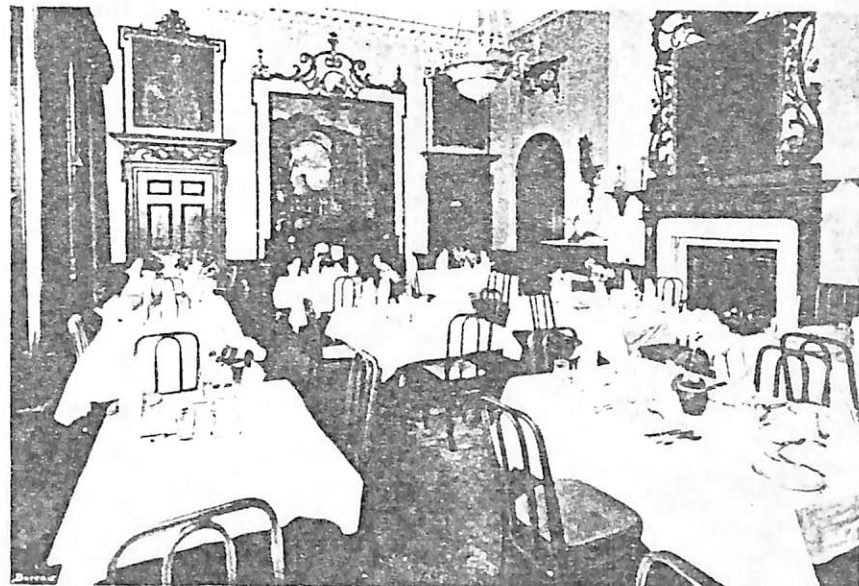
2



The Entrance Hall.



Lawton Hall from the Park



Photograph by

The Dining Room

The Carlyle Publishing Co. Ltd.

LAWTON-HALL-HOTEL... 1934 (From a brochure)

Lawton Hall, which was for many centuries the country residence of the Lawton family, is an imposing double-fronted mansion, dating partly from the days of George II.* Situated on the borders of Cheshire it stands on a natural terrace 350 feet above sea-level, in the midst of extensive grounds. On the north side lies the well-wooded Cheshire Plain, and on the south there is the ridge of the Staffordshire & Cheshire Hills.

Approached by three fine drives, one of which is nearly a mile long, through beautiful woods and shrubberies, Lawton Hall stands in the midst of a private estate of over two hundred acres, consisting of well-kept lawns, flower gardens, terraces, and an extensive park and woods, providing a variety of delightful walks without leaving the grounds of the Hall. Also there are a private golf course, hard and grass tennis courts, croquet and putting-greens, and a beautiful lake, providing recreation for those interested in fishing. A mile in circumference, and set amid delightful wooded slopes, it affords the angler many happy hours.

The original Hall was built at the time of the Confessor* and bore the name of Lautune, and we read of one Richard, son of Adam de Lawton, possessing a moiety* of the township in the latter part of the twelfth century. In Henry VIII's* time the Lawtons purchased the whole manor. Charles II* once hid in the Hall, and the Oak-Room is known as the King's Room, because it was used as a bedroom by the Merry Monarch. There is also shown the King's hiding-place beneath the passage leading from the small drawing room to the library. During his stay he presented to the son of the Lawtons, to whom he acted as godfather, an exquisite drinking cup, and later gave to the family the portraits of himself and the Duke of Monmouth* by Sir Peter Lely*, which adorn the Dining Room. The octagonal Pigeon-Tower was another gift from the King. During Jacobean* and Georgian* days the Hall was reconstructed to form the present magnificent residence, and the great park was laid out.

The Entrance Hall has a wonderful oak staircase, carved mantle piece, furniture, and a handsome cabinet; the Dining Hall, besides the portraits, has a conspicuously beautiful ceiling, mouldings and frescoes, and two rare sideboards and wine-cooler; the lounge is chiefly interesting for its magnificent mantelpiece, with a panel of the Money-Changers, thought to be a Holbein*.

Letters are delivered and despatched twice daily. London papers may be had at an early hour. The Cuisine and service are first-class. Lawton Hall being noted for its catering and excellent cellar. Individual requirements receive personal consideration.

Wines, Spirits, Ales, Minerals, Chocolates, Cigars, Cigarettes, and Tobacco of the choicest brands, may be obtained in the Hotel... Dogs may be kept in the stables, but are not allowed in any part of the Hotel... Electric Light and Central Heating are installed

throughout. The sanitary-arrangements and water-supply are absolutely modern.

During the winter season, Gala Dinner Dances, which are attended by the numerous County Families in the surrounding districts, are held every Saturday evening. Fishing, Golf, Tennis, Croquet, Putting, Billiards etc., are free to residents. The close season for fishing is from March 15th to June 10th.

Lawton Hall is noted for its vegetables and fruit which may be purchased fresh daily from the Hotel Kitchen-Gardens, Vineries, Nectarine and Peach Houses... Wedding-Receptions, Christmas and Birthday Parties, Dinners, Dances, and all public functions are arranged and catered for... This beautiful mansion makes an ideal first-class country hotel for forty or fifty guests, and its magnificent Dining-Hall and Lounges offer accommodation for Banquets, Receptions, Dinners, Dances, etc. for up to one hundred people.

An excellent service of first-class motor buses passes the entrance gates for Crewe, Hanley, Stoke, Burslem, Tunstall, etc..

TARIFF.

Apartments... Single Bedrooms...	from 6/6	(33p)
Double Bedrooms	13/-	(65p)
Private Sitting Rooms	10/6	(53p)
Breakfast ... 8 to 9.30.. Table d'Hôte	3/-	(15p)
Plain	2/-	(10p)
Luncheon 1 to 2 : Table d'Hôte	3/-	(15p)
Afternoon tea...	1/6	(8p)
Dinner ... 7 - 8.30.. Table d'Hôte..	4/-	(20p)
Supper...	3/-	(15p)
Extras... Meals served in Rooms ...	1/-	(5p)
Fires : per day...	1/6	(8p)
Garage : per day .. 1/- ... per week ...	5/-	(25p)

Inclusive Terms (minimum, three days) ... per day.. 15/- (75p)
 Special Weekly En Pension Terms by arrangement for a prolonged stay or permanent residence from 3¹/₂ guineas per week. (£3..68p).

N.B...	George II	1727 - 1760
*	The Confessor (i.e. Edward I)	1042 - 1066
	Moffy... A half share	
	Henry VIII ...	1509 - 1547
	{ Charles II (The Merry Monarch)	1660 - 1685
	{ The Duke of Monmouth (His illegitimate son)	1649 - 1685
	Sir Peter Lely.. Court Painter to Charles II	
	Jacobean.. (During the Reign of James I)	1603 - 1625
	Georgian.. (During the Reigns of George I - IV)	1714 - 1830
	Holbein.. Court Painter to Henry VIII	1497 - 1543

A REMARKABLE LADY 'IN-DEED'!

Among the paintings, which hung until recently in Lawton Hall, was a portrait of a lady, holding in her hand a scroll, on which was written, "Rights recovered." Behind this picture there lies a story of intrigue and determination...

The lady, born in 1747, was Anne, the daughter and co-heiress of Charles Crewe Esq., of Warmingham, a Cheshire M.P.

In 1770, at the age of twenty three, she married John, son and heir of Robert Lawton, Esq., on whose death in 1777 he inherited the Lawton estates.

By the time that John himself died in 1804, these estates had become sadly depleted, and many of the 'Deeds' relating to various lands and properties (which included several very valuable coal-mines) had fallen into the hands of his seemingly unscrupulous Steward, who resided at that time at Bridge Farm. How this had come about is not certain. Perhaps they had been made over as securities against loans, or had been used to settle debts. It can only be speculated...

This sad state of affairs continued until one day in 1809 when news was sent to the Hall that the Steward had been found dead, sitting in his office-chair, with all his papers spread around him. Wasting no time, Anne soon covered the five hundred or so yards between the Hall and Bridge-Farm, arriving there before the body or anything else had been moved. There, she insisted on being locked in the Office, where, despite the presence of the Steward's body, she remained until she had sorted through all the papers, and recovered all those which she felt rightly belonged to the Lawton Estates.

Thus the family fortunes were restored by this remarkable lady, who was herself to live for only a few more months. She died on November 29th. 1810, at the age of sixty three.

Had the Steward outlived her there might have been quite a different ending to the story.

S. J. T.

Please Return

OUR CONNECTIONS WITH ST. WERBURGH

OUR SAINTLY CONNECTION

We do not know for certain just how long ago it was that the first church was built at Lawton. It is somewhere recorded that in 1180 we had a Rector named 'Edward' so we do know that there has been a church for at least 800 years. But Lawton may have had Christian beginnings long before that, for there is a tradition that the remains of St. Werburgh rested here overnight on their journey to Chester in 875 A.D. and it may well be that there was already a simple church here in those days, as it is unlikely that such saintly-remains would have been taken in to any building other than a consecrated one...Or perhaps a rough shelter was erected for the night on a spot, which thereby became sanctified and the subsequent site for our earliest church. We will never know, and we can only speculate....

St. Werburgh had died around 699 A.D. and so you may well wonder just why her 'remains' came to be on the move nearly two hundred years after her death!

She was the daughter of Wulfere, a 7th Century King of Mercia (that ancient Kingdom which stretched from the Severn to East-Anglia in one direction, and from the Humber to the Thames in the other). It is said that he had already had two of his sons put to death for becoming Christians, but his heart must have softened a little towards his daughter, for he allowed her to enter the Abbey of Ely, where his Aunt happened to be Abbess. There, at a very tender age Werburgh herself took her vows, and in time she was appointed to take charge of four Mercian Nunneries - Trentham, Repton, Hanbury, and Weedon. It is said that she was so "virtuously disposed that she cared for no worldly honours but gave herself to godly and holy contemplations."

In due course she died - at Trentham. But having left instructions that she wished to be buried at Hanbury, it was to Hanbury she was taken, and it was there that she lay undisturbed for many many years.

But in 875, that part of the country became threatened by bands of marauding Danes, and when it was learned that some of them had reached Repton, only a few miles away, it was decided to take up the Remains of the Saint and take them to a safer place...And where else but to Chester - situated on the furthestmost western boundary of the Kingdom, and well away, it was hoped, from the threatening Danes.

It must be remembered that not only were Saintly Remains greatly venerated in the Middle Ages, but they were also a great source of wealth to any church which possessed them. For those were the days when pilgrimages were fashionable, not only for the sick and disabled seeking miracle cures, but also for more ordinary folk for whom a pilgrimage was somewhat of a prestigious achievement and from which they would return feeling perhaps that a little saintliness had 'rubbed off on them' - so to speak - from their 'saintly' encounter. And of course, the deeper their pockets, the closer that encounter might be expected to be. The poor pilgrim with little in his purse might only be allowed a brief prayer at the shrine, whilst others, according to their means, might have the privilege of seeing or kissing the reliquary (the casket containing the remains); of being given a glimpse of the contents; or even of momentarily handling the relics themselves.

And so it was that any church which possessed so much as the thumb-bone of St. Thingumajig really was in business!

But perhaps our band of travellers had more spiritual motives for their journey to Chester. It would be nice to think that they had. Tradition has it that they rested their first night at Trentham, and that it was the second night of their journey which was spent at Lawton. It must have taken well over a week to cover the route, on roads which to us would seem little more than cart-tracks through the forest. Their destination reached, the Saint's remains were probably housed in the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul which may have stood on the site of the present Cathedral. In due course an Abbey was built and dedicated to St. Werburgh, and an elaborately carved and decorated shrine was erected to contain her remains, and become a focal-point for pilgrims over the centuries. Sadly the shrine was destroyed during the Reformation, but parts of it have since been salvaged and a somewhat battered reconstruction of it can still be seen in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral to this day. But alas for those saintly relics which rested in Church Lawton over eleven hundred years ago and subsequently in the shrine, no trace remains.

Perhaps if you ever visit Chester Cathedral, and look at the shrine, you will remember its story, and how it is connected with our own parish at the other end of the County.

S.J.T.

This is a photocopy of a page of our ancient register which begins in 1559 and is written on vellum (fine animal skin) pages. It is a list of baptisms starting in 1596, which read as follows (written in Latin):-

Septembr 12^o... Alicia filia Elen Cartwright... illegitime procreat... baptizat fuit.
 (September 12th... Alice, daughter of Ellen Cartwright... illegitimately conceived... was baptiz
 xxj^o die... Willimū filius Jacobi Beech de Woolsiston baptizat fuit.
 (21st day... William, son of James Beech of Wolstanton, was baptised).
 Novembr 10... Margaret filia Nicholai Hobson et Mgaret uxor baptizat fuit.
 (November 10th... Margaret, daughter of Nicholas Hobson and Margaret his wife, was baptised)
 Decembr V^{to}... Ranulphus filius Willimi Kent de Rode fuit baptizat.
 (December 5th... Ralph, son of William Kent of Rode, was baptised)
 January 10... Johēs filius Ranulphi Lawton et Katherin eius uxor baptizat fuit.
 (January 10th... John, son of Ralph Lawton and Katherine... wife of... was baptised)
 February 13^o... Johēs, filius Johis Muchell et Elen uxor eius baptizat fuit.
 (February 13th... John, son of John Muchell and Ellen, wife of... was baptised)
 xxiii die... Sara filia Willimi Weram et Eliz: uxor eius baptizata fuit.
 (23rd day... Sarah, daughter of William Weram, and Elizabeth... wife of... was baptised)
 27 die eiusde mōsis... Ranulphus filius Petri Holford et Alic uxor eius baptizat fuit.
 (27th day of the month... Ralph, son of Peter Holford and Alice... wife of... was baptised)
Noiā baptizator a^o dni 1597.

(Names of those baptised in the year of our Lord 1597)

1597.. July 15^o.. Alicia filia Roberti Barker de Talke baptizat fuit.
 (1597.. July 15th.. Alice, daughter of Robert Barker of Talke, was baptised.)
 die 23^o.. Thomas, filius Helen Tompson ~ spurius baptis: fuit,
 (23rd day... Thomas, son of Helen Tompson... illegitimate... was baptised.)
 January xj^{mo}.. Thomas, filius Jacobi Clouse de Rode baptizatus fuit.
 (January 11th.. Thomas, son of James Clowes of Rode, was baptised.)
 Die xiii^o.. Margaret filia Johis Gibson de Woolsiston baptizat fuit.
 (13th day... Margaret, daughter of John Gibson of Wolstanton, was baptised.)
 Die xxii^o.. Thomas, filius Thome Beech Clici de Talke baptizat fuit,
 (22nd day... Thomas, son of Thomas Beech... clerk... of Talke, was baptised)
 February xv^{to}.. Elena filia Willimi Stoniar de Rode baptizat fuit.
 (February 15th.. Eleanor, daughter of William Stonier of Rode, was baptis
 Die xxvj^{to}.. Johēs filius Johis Twenloe de Rode baptizat fuit.
 (26th day... John, son of John Twenlow of Rode was baptised)
 19^o die Martij.. Johes filius Thome Hyndley et Johanne uxor eius baptizat fuit.
 (19th March... John, son of Thomas Hindley and Joanne... wife of... was baptised).

Civiliol: } Lawton... John Lawton.. Rich Cartwright - Gard.
 Rectide)

(William Lawton, Rector of Lawton... John Lawton... Richard Cartwright... Warden).

W.B. Wolstanton, Rode, and Talke, are neighbouring parishes.

September 12 Alina filia Elan Cuthbert
 baptizata fuit.
 die 10^o primum filius Jacobus Dreyer
 baptizatus fuit.
 November 10 margarita filia Willelmi Hopson
 baptizata fuit.
 December 10 Franciscus filius Willelmi Dreyer
 baptizatus fuit.
 January 10 Josephus filius Francisci Lawton et
 Agathe uxoris baptizatus fuit.
 February 13 Josephus filius Josephi Manger et
 Agathe uxoris baptizatus fuit.
 die 20^o Anna filia Willelmi Dreyer et
 Agathe uxoris baptizata fuit.
 27^o die eiusdem mensis Franciscus filius
 Josephi et Agathe uxoris baptizatus fuit.

Non baptizator a die 15^o 1597.

1597.

July 15 Alina filia Roberti Dreyer de
 baptizata fuit.
 die 23^o Thomas filius Thome Compton
 baptizatus fuit.
 die 29^o Thomas filius Jacobi Alcock
 baptizatus fuit.
 die 30^o Margarita filia Josephi Dreyer de
 baptizata fuit.
 die 31^o Thomas filius Thome Dreyer
 baptizatus fuit.
 February 20^o Anna filia Willelmi Dreyer
 baptizata fuit.
 die 22^o Josephus filius Josephi Dreyer
 baptizatus fuit.
 die 19^o Maria filia Francisci Thomae
 baptizata fuit.

Michael Dreyer et alii filii Thome Compton baptizati

A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF THE TRAGEDY WHICH STRUCK
LAWTON-CHURCH ON JUNE 20th. 1652 (By Ralph Sillito, Rector).

Whilst the Rector, Ralph Sillito, was preaching to a large congregation, eleven young men were killed instantly by lightning. In a letter to a friend, Mr. Sillito states that during the service there was a great deal of thunder and lightning. Commencing his sermon he had not... "Spoken very many words, but a sudden noise was heard in the bell-house, like the discharge of many muskets at once.... A dog began to yelp in the bell-house, and a boy cried out for his brother, upon which followed a noise and bustle among the people. A report was brought to the upper end of the church that no harm was done, but a dog killed. A second report that none were slain, but two or three did bleed. The third report was more sad - that three or four were slain. I spoke to the people, and told them to be still, and they readily hearkened. Some carried out their friends very silently, and the rest settled themselves. We continued the usual time. After the service was done, we had a sad spectacle. Eleven men and boys were stricken immediately dead (for I cannot certainly hear that any of them either spoke, or groaned, or stirred - but some sat, and some lay as though they had been asleep). No wounds, no bruises on any of them, only one to have his hair and ear burned a little. Another was scorched in the neck. On some of their clothes there were no signs of fire. All of them died in the bell-house where they sat or stood (by reason that the congregation is usually very full) except one boy who was seated in the lower end of the church, close to the bell-house-door. Many others were struck down but are likely to recover... The next morning I viewed the faces of the dead men, which were most of them black. One little boy, who was my scholar, a son of John Pursel's I viewed all over, and from the top of his ear to the sole of his feet he was black on the left side. On Monday, the dead were interred in eleven graves in our churchyard of Lawton, where there was a great throng of people. The names of those who fell in this mighty hand of God were: - William Beech of Butt Lane; William Wearham of Audley; Thomas Pool, blacksmith of Rode; John Haughton, servant to Mrs. Hancock of Rode; William Brereton, servant of John Stonier of Rode; Peter Capper, servant of Richard Merrill of Dawe Green, Alsager; John Parker of Sandbach; Antony, a lad born in Yorkshire; Francis Low, carpenter of Lawton; John Pursell, carpenter of Lawton."

(The eleventh victim was John Hall, whose name was omitted from the list).

The entry in the burial-register is written in Latin and reads as follows: -
"1652..Juny 21.. Franciscus Lowe. Johēs Pursell. Thomas Poole. Johēs Hall. Willimus Beech. Johēs Parker. Willmūs Wearham. Petrus Capper. Johēs Haughton. Willmūs Brereton et Antoinus puer Eboracensis sepulti fuerunt, qui obierunt subito fulmine proculsi die dominico in Campanili Ecclesia de Church Lawton & infinia parti navis ejusdem Ecclesiae"... Translated as follows: -
.... They were buried.. who died suddenly by distant lightning on the Lords Day in the bell-tower of Church-Lawton, and the far part of the nave of the same Church..... Tradition has it that they were buried under the East-Window.

This is a photo-copy of the page from our ancient burial register on which is entered the burial of the eleven men who were killed when lightning struck the Church Tower in 1652. The entries read as follows:—

1649.. Februar 16^o.. Robertus Lee.

(February 16th.. Robert Lee)

eodem die.. Infans Williami Cleyton de Mosse

(The same day.. An infant of William Cleyton's of Moss)

Februar 28^o.. Margareta uxor Thom̄ Shawe de Mosse.

(Margaret, wife of Thomas Shaw of Mosse)

1651.. Octob 20.. Vid̄ Muchel de Lane.

(October 20th).. Widow Muchel of Lane.

27.. Infans Thomas Gough.

(27th.. An infant of Thomas Gough)

March.. Joanna uxor Joh̄is Rathbone de Talke.

(Joanne wife of John Rathbone of Talke.)

1652.

April 11.. Catharina uxor Ric̄i Shipplebothom

(April 11.. Catherine, wife of Richard Shipplebothom).

June 21.. Franciscus Howe. Joh̄es Pursell. Thomas Poole.

Joh̄es Hall. Willm̄us Beech. Joh̄es Parker.

Willm̄us Wearham. Petrus Capper. Joh̄es Haughton.

Willm̄us Breerton, et Antoinius puer Eboracensis

sepulti fuerunt, qui obierunt subito fulmine prulsi

die dominico in Campanili Ecclesia de Churchlawton

† infinia parti navis ejusdem Ecclesiae.

(June 21st.. Francis Howe. John Pursell. Thomas Poole.

John Hall. William Beech. John Parker.

William Warham. Peter Capper. John Haughton.

William Breerton, and Anthony, a boy from Yorkshire,

who died suddenly by distant lightning, on the Lords Day

(Sunday) in the bell-tower, of Churchlawton, and the

far part of the nave of the same Church).

June 30.. Johes filius Johis Eastley.. Infans.

(June 30th.. John son of John Eastley... Infant.)

July 5^o.. Willm̄us Jackson de Thurlwood.

(July 5th.. William Jackson of Thurlwood)

N.B. Lane, Moss, and Thurlwood, are local areas.

1649 Februar 16. Robertus Peck
Eodem die Infans William Gyton de Mosse
Februar 25. Margaritae uxoris Thomae Shears de Mosse

1651. Octob. 20. vid. Murel de Laure
27. Infans Thomas Gough.

Martin Joanna uxor Johis Rectoris de Valle
1652. April 11. Catharina uxor Rici Shippilohym

Junij 21. Tharvilius Lowe, Johes Purcell, Thomas Pecke
Johes Hall, Willimus Beerth, Johes Parke
Willimus Weancham, Petrus Carr
Johes Haughton, Petrus Houghton
et Antonius uxor. Eboracensis exult
fuerunt, qui fuerunt subito fulmine perculsi
die dominico in Cantuarie Ecclesia de Churc
Linton in infima parte navis ejusdem Ecclesie

Junij 30. Johes filius Johis Cardby Infans
Julij 5. Willimus Jackson de Tharlowood.

Supra
1652
Churc



ALL-SAINTS... CHURCH LAWTON.

ADAM AND EVE ALMS DISH.

PLATE WITH A HISTORY.
'Adam and Eve' Alms Dish... All Saints ...

The large brass plate which stands on the small credence table near the altar, is used to receive the collecting plates brought up to the front of the Church by Sidesmen during services.

It is said to be one of only four such surviving plates in the country, and is known as an 'Adam and Eve Alms Dish'.

Close inspection will reveal just why it has been given this name, for its centre bears a rather primitive, yet intricately-detailed picture of Adam and Eve, carefully tooled into the brass. Adam stands on the left, an ugly-looking club gripped in his right hand, whilst his left hand is stretched out towards Eve, who faces him on the right. He appears to be reaching out for the apple which she is temptingly holding up in her right hand. This is still attached to a branch, seemingly broken off from the tree behind them, and in its turn firmly held in the mouth of the serpent, which is coiled around the trunk of the tree, its head extended above Eve.

The figures have surprisingly shapely legs, and very distinct ribs, although the craftsman who carried out the work could not have been very knowledgeable about anatomy, as he only gave them three pairs each (and what happened to the one which Adam is supposed to have lost to Eve?) Behind the figures, the tree has beautifully-shaped branches and leaves, and bears several more apples. The rim of the plate has to be examined at close quarters to fully appreciate the delicate workmanship used in the intricate patterns which it bears; the two outer circles of pattern being built up by a continuous coiled-rope effect, the detail of which has to be seen to be believed.

Alas we have no record of just how old is the plate, and for how many centuries it has been in use in our Church, but we do however know that it was in use in 1817, for it was during that year that it mysteriously disappeared. Almost eighty years were to elapse before it was found, lying at the bottom of the canal, during dredging work, presumably having lain there for all the years it had been missing.

It is thought that it may have been stolen in the belief that it was made of gold, and on realization that it was merely brass, had been thrown by the thief into the canal. It is said that at the time of the discovery there was just one old lady in the parish who could remember back to the time when she had seen it being used in Church all those years previously.

Whether the evident signs of damage to the plate were a result of its sojourn in the canal, or merely the result of general wear and tear over the ages is not known. Whatever the cause, it was decided in 1968 that it was in need of urgent repair, and these repairs were carried out by Mr. L. Roberts, thus ensuring that this ancient vessel could continue in use in our Church for what we hope will be countless more generations yet to come.

LAWTON - FURNACE.

For over a hundred years, from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, there was in Lawton, an important furnace. It was probably situated in the region of the cross-roads at 'Red Bull', as the south-east corner there is still known to the older generation as 'Furnace Bank', and a cottage there, now demolished, was called Furnace-Cottage.

The function of the furnace was the production of 'pig-iron'... roughly-cast iron made by smelting ironstone brought in from mines in nearby areas of North-Staffordshire. This was then sold to forges where it would be made into items varying from farm tools to flat-irons; and doubtless much of it ended up clattering up and down the roads of Cheshire and Staffordshire on the hooves of horses and the rims of cartwheels.

Records tell us that in the years 1696-1702 the average annual output reached 700 tons, and that in the two following years this increased to 900 tons. Assuming that no work was done on Sundays this means that the furnace must have been producing almost three tons of pig-iron daily. Records also tell us that some of it was sold as far afield as Bewdley in Worcestershire, some fifty miles away from Church Lawton, and to where it was doubtless conveyed by pack-horse, and possibly by boat down the River Severn on the last part of its journey.

The smelting itself was done with charcoal, huge quantities of which must have been needed to feed the furnace, and produce the heat required to render the ironstone into pig-iron, and it is safe to assume that there must have been many charcoal-burners scraping a living in the woodlands of South Cheshire during that period when the furnace was in operation, especially as there was also a rival furnace two miles down the road at 'Street' Hall, for that part of the Knutsford Road is still called Street-Lane.

The Furnace was leased to the Foleys, who had a number of furnaces in this part of the Country, and it was under the direction of ironmasters such as Thomas Hall, Edward Hall, and Daniel Cotton, whose position gave them some great standing in the community. One of the church-bells was donated by them, and is inscribed, "The gift of the Present Ironmasters of Lawton Furnace out of true respect to the Parish of Lawton, 1713". (The bell, of course, was not made at the furnace, being cast in bronze, not iron).

Eventually, the supply of timber available for charcoal-burning became more scarce, and competition for it became keener. Thomas Hall, in a desperate attempt to keep the Lawton Furnace in operation, made a 'take-over-bid' for Street Furnace, which after buying, he subsequently

dismantled - an effective but dramatic way of maintaining supremacy. However, this produced only a short-lived reprieve, for soon the last supplies of charcoal were exhausted, and Lawton Furnace, too, fell into disuse. Had it managed to keep going just a little longer, things may have been very different, for by that time, over in Coalbrookdale, Shropshire, Abraham Darby had discovered how to smelt iron using coke instead of charcoal, and who knows but that with the subsequent building of the Trent and Mersey Canal, and later the North Staffordshire Railways, Church Lawton may have developed into a thriving industrial area instead of the peaceful rural parish that it is today.

S. J. T... 1981

Two of the oldest gravestones in the churchyard are those of a Lawton Furnace stocktaker and his wife, who lie side by side below the east window. Their inscriptions read as follows :-

HERE LYETH
THE BODY OF
JOHN PROBERT .
WHO DEPARTED THIS
LIFE MARCH 7 20th
ANNO DOMINI 1712
HE WAS STOCKTAKER AT
MADELEY FURNACE SEA-
VEN YEARS, AND THE
SAME AT LAWTON FUR-
NACE ABOUT TWENTY FOUR
YEARS.

HERE LYETH
THE BODY OF MARGERY
THE WIFE OF JOHN PRO-
BERT WHO WAS STOCK
TAKER AT LAWTON FUR-
NACE. SHE DEPARTED
THIS LIFE DECEMBER
THE SEVENTEENTH DAY.
AND WAS INTERRED THE
TWEN'TH OF DECEMBER
ANNO DOMINI 1712.

A tombstone in the South-West corner of the churchyard bears an inscription which refers to Street-Forge :-

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF SARAH
DAUGHTER OF JOHN PADDY OF STREET FORGE
WHO IN HOPE OF A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION WITH
HUMILITY, PATIENCE AND CHRISTIAN FORTITUDE
WORTHY OF IMITATION, RESIGNED HER SOUL TO
GOD ON THE 20th DAY OF APRIL 1770 AND
IN THE 19th YEAR OF HER AGE.